

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T CAIRO 17914

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR EG IS US
SUBJECT: PRIMIN BEGIN'S "PERMANENT PARTIAL AGREEMENTS"
IDEA

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 9550, (B) CAIRO 17589, (C) JERUSALEM 2044

1. DO NOT WISH TO BE A SPOILSPORT, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN ENCOURAGING BEGIN TO BELIEVE THAT HIS "PERMANENT PARTIAL AGREEMENT" FORMULA IS LIKELY TO FIND MUCH ACCEPTANCE HERE. BEGIN'S EXAMPLE OF AL-ARISH AND MOUNT SINAI ENCLAVES, IN RETURN FOR AGREEMENT TO KEEP THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN RAFFAH PROTECTED BY LOCAL BORDER GUARDS OF SOME FORM, WILL NOT COMMEND ITSELF TO SADAT. ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF "BARTER" DEMAND THAT HE SO ANGRILY DISMISSED DURING MY LAST TALK WITH HIM (REF B).
2. I DO NOT SHARE SAM'S VIEW THAT SOME OF SADAT'S STATEMENTS TO WEIZMAN AT THEIR LAST MEETING WERE INTENDED TO HINT AT THIS KIND OF ARRANGEMENT. SADAT SUGGESTED
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AL ARISH/MOUNT SINAI ENCLAVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF A FREE GESTURE ISRAELIS SHOULD MAKE IF THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT WANTING PEACE. SADAT MAY HAVE BEEN NAIVE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD GIVE HIM ANYTHING FOR NOTHING, BUT HE WILL CERTAINLY NOT AGREE TO THE KIND OF THING BEGIN SUGGESTS. MOREOVER, BEGIN'S DISCLOSURE OF SADAT'S SUGGESTION TO WEIZMAN HAS EMBARRASSED THE

PRESIDENT. THIS, COUPLED WITH BEGIN'S MESSAGE TO SADAT (WHICH HE REFUSED TO RECEIVE, BUT CONTENTS OF WHICH ARE WIDELY KNOWN), HAVE EXACERBATED HIS BITTERNESS TOWARD BEGIN. I GATHER FROM ROY (REF C) THAT WE MAY BE OBLIGATED TO MENTION BEGIN'S IDEA TO SADAT, BUT ROY WILL BE WELL ADVISED TO AVOID EVEN THE SLIGHTEST SUGGESTION OF USG ENDORSEMENT OF THE IDEA. IF SADAT CONCLUDES THAT WE ARE NOW MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION, AND HE IS ALREADY WORRIED ABOUT OUR INSISTENCE ON ANOTHER MEETING, MUCH OF HIS CONFIDENCE IN US WILL BE DISSIPATED.

3. I WAS GLAD TO SEE ONE ADVANCE IN MR. BEGIN'S THINKING. INSTEAD OF IDF FORCES, HE NOW SUGGESTS THAT LOCAL BORDER GUARDS PROTECT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. HIS SUGGESTION AT THE ISMAILIA MINI-SUMMIT THAT THE SETTLEMENTS REMAIN WITH IDF FORCES PROTECTING THEM HUMILIATED SADAT AND WAS A MAJOR FACTOR IN GENERATING THE DISTRUST AND DISLIKE THAT SADAT SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED FOR BEGIN AS A PERSON.

4. IT MAY AT SOME POINT BE NECESSARY TO GO BACK TO INTERIM AGREEMENTS. WHETHER THEY ARE WHAT BEGIN CALLS "PERMANENT" OR OTHERWISE IS REALLY IRRELEVANT. BUT ANY SUCH INTERIM AGREEMENT, IF IT IS TO HAVE ANY ATTRACTION HERE, WILL HAVE TO BE A GREAT DEAL MORE SUBSTANTIAL IN NATURE THAN HUCKSTERING FOR AL-ARISH/MOUNT SINAI
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ENCLAVES. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT IN FEBRUARY 1976, I WAS INSTRUCTED TO RAISE WITH SADAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW INTERIM AGREEMENT BASED ON A BENT AL-ARISH/RAS MOHAMED LINE IN RETURN FOR TERMINATION OF BELLIGERENCY. AT THE TIME, SADAT WAS TEPID ON THE IDEA. I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAS CHANGED HIS MIND.

5. APART FROM THIS, I THINK ANY REVERSION TO INTERIM AGREEMENTS WILL HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFULLY HANDLED. IF WE AGAIN BEGIN PUSHING THIS CONCEPT WITHOUT SOME DEMONSTRABLE JUSTIFICATION, SADAT WILL SEE IT AS WELCHING ON OUR STATED POLICY TO WORK FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IF HIS TRUST IN US IS SHAKEN, THE TASK OF GETTING HIM TO COOPERATE WILL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT ALREADY IS. ANY SUCH CONCEPT, SHOULD WE AT ANY TIME DECIDE TO GO THAT ROUTE, WOULD HAVE TO BE PRESENTED AS A DEMONSTRABLE STEPPING STONE TOWARD AN OVERALL COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT. EVEN THEN SADAT WILL HAVE TROUBLE SWALLOWING IT. EILTS

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